

# Resolution for Coach Sweet

Superintendent says pressure  
from parents was not a factor

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The dispute over the failure to renew the contract of DHS lacrosse coach Chris Sweet had the whole town boiling. But in the end, it was a face-to-face meeting between two people that led to a solution.

Superintendent of Schools Susan Skeiber met with Sweet last Tuesday and, at the end of the meeting Sweet had a contract to return as coach.

Sweet said that all he wanted, since he first heard the news he wouldn't be returning, was a chance to speak to

the superintendent.

"I was confident if we met, she would decide to keep me as coach," he said. "I'm going to give her the credit ... she is the head of the school system, there were enough people who objected to the original decision."

Skeiber denied that the decision was shaped by the growing outrage from parents and players — both current and former — who claimed that the move not to bring Sweet back was spearheaded by just a few disgruntled parents.

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"It was really the discussion we had," she said. "We were able to get to the bottom of some issues."

Sweet was reluctant to disclose any details of the meeting, but said Skeiber was more concerned with moving forward than dissecting the reasons he was initially not offered a contract.

"She didn't want to get into the past, as to why it happened," he said. "She wanted to make sure we weren't putting winning above anything else ... that winning wasn't coming before what was best for the kids."

"I assured her I thought we were doing things properly," he added. "I think by the end of the meeting she felt things were being done properly."

Sweet's supporters were elated at hearing the news he would be returning for another season.

"I was definitely thrilled," said Bill O'Toole. "It's fortunate for the town of Duxbury as well. He's a fine individual and a great coach."

O'Toole said he still isn't sure why the coach was initially told he wouldn't be com-

ing back, but was asked if he thought the pressure from his group and others (O'Toole led a contingent of parents who took out newspaper ads asking the school administration to change their minds) had an effect. He said that if the administration listened to parents unhappy with the coach it would stand to reason that the very vocal support for him also had to weigh in.

"If the few led to the confusion you'd have to think the many led to the resolution," he said.

O'Toole is more involved with the youth lacrosse program in town than the high school team, but said Sweet's effect is felt all across Duxbury.

"It's what they all aspire to," he said. "When [the high school players] do well, the younger kids want to do that. It lifts up the whole program."

Duxbury High School Athletic Director Thom Holdgate said he was glad to see Sweet and the superintendent come to an agreement.

"I'm just glad to see that there's some closure," he said.

When asked if the situation would lead to any chang-

es in how coaches are evaluated, Holdgate deferred to the School Committee and the administration. However, he did say nothing like this has happened in his 10 years as athletic director, and he hopes to learn something from the dispute.

For his part, Sweet is glad to be back in his familiar position as head of the boys lacrosse program.

"My heart's in Duxbury," he said. "I've been associated with the program for a long time. I couldn't picture myself coaching anywhere else. I felt all along there was some kind of misunderstanding and if we could just sit down in a meeting we could work it out."